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ABSTRACT

This review analyzes current literature dealing with the expectations and demands of the public for their schools. Particular attention is paid to research that assesses variations in public expectations and demands according to demographic and geographic settings, age, ethnic status, and socioeconomic status. A 65-item bibliography of recent literature is included. (JH)

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FOREWORD

In mid-June 1970 the Clearinghouse received an urgent request from Central ERIC in the U.S. Office of Education to prepare selected bibliographies and brief analyses of literature on eleven critical topics related to school organization and administration.

The bibliographies and reviews were required by USOE's National Center for Educational Research and Development (formerly the Bureau of Research) in planning its new program of directed research and development. School organization and administration is one of four areas of education chosen by the center to receive concentrated research and development assistance. The others are reading, early childhood, and vocational education.

Through a joint effort the Clearinghouse staff completed the bibliographies and reviews for shipment to USOE by July 2, the deadline date.

The analysis and bibliography combined here focus on the expectations of the public for the schools, particularly with variations according to demographic setting, age, ethnic background, and income.

The literature cited in the bibliography and reviewed in the paper was drawn from a search of the two ERIC index catalogs, Research in Education and Current Index to Journals in Education, and from the following non-ERIC sources: Books in Print, Cumulative Book Index, Education Index, Public Affairs Information Service, Sociological Abstracts, Social Sciences and Humanities Index, and Book Review Digest. Although the urgency of the request precluded a full and comprehensive search and analysis of the literature, the reviews and bibliographies are intended to assess accurately some of the current developments and emerging trends on the topic.

Many of the documents cited in the bibliography can be ordered from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Instructions for ordering these documents are given at the end of the bibliography.

Philip K. Piele
Director

Analysis of Literature on

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL DEMANDS ON THE SCHOOLS

A large body of literature has grown with the demands of clients of education for greater participation in the decision-making and policy formulation processes. Clients include groups of students or citizens with a stake in the educational institution who are motivated to take some action in its regard (Cunningham 1969). Subgroups from these main groups of clients have expressed both a dissatisfaction with the system of public education and a desire to participate actively in restructuring that system. Most of the literature dealing with student, minority group, and general community demands for participation in school decision-making has described the interactions between client subgroups and traditional educational managers. Generally, this literature also speculates on the future of education, given acquiesence to some of these demands.

A small, but rapidly increasing segment of the literature attempts to analyze the impact and consequences of student demands for greater participation in public school decision-making (for a recent bibliography, see Hall 1969). Much of this literature is in the form of journal articles, speeches, pamphlets, etc. However, one excellent reader (Nystrand 1969) provides an overview of the central issues and demands of the movement.

Much of the literature treats the demand for decentralization of

urban school systems (for a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography of community control/decentralization literature, see The Center Forum May 15, 1969). Among documents that outline the general decentralization movement, Johnson and Usdan (1968) provide an excellent forum for understanding decentralization proposals and the relationship between this type of administrative change and other demands on the educational system.

Several excellent analyses have focused on the community control controversy in New York City (Gittell 1966, Gittell and Hevesi 1969, Mayer 1969, and Rogers 1968). As case studies, these works offer indepth treatment of the patterns of interaction among the proponents and opponents of New York's decentralization experiment. Although demands for decentralization have been heard in other major urban areas, New York City is the contemporary focal point of the movement. Thus the studies noted above assess a reform movement that may "very likely reflect the character of the struggle as it will emerge throughout America's urban centers" (Gittell and Hevesi 1969).

Although this literature offers valuable insight into the generalized demand for community control, the specific expectations of ghetto residents are often overlooked. One exception to this general trend is reported in a survey of attitudes of parents living in New York areas represented by leaders who have adamantly supported decentralization (Lang and others 1968). This study found that while a strong majority of the parents surveyed supported the general demand for community control, they disagreed significantly as to the extent of influence over the educational process that should be wielded by members

of the community.

Although the demand for greater participation in the affairs of public schools has been epitomized by the action of black ghetto residents of New York City, the literature indicates that these demands are not limited to one ethnic group in one region. One report of a meeting of leaders of Southwestern minority groups (Burger 1969) concluded that the minority groups of that region--Amerindians, Blacks, and Spanish speaking--shared two primary ambivalences with regard to their perceptions of educational issues: (1) While the child should be educated to make a living in the modern world, he should also remain within the ethnic culture fold; and (2) while minority groups resent not having political power, some still fear formally organized political action groups. The few other recent studies that have attempted to identify the unique educational needs and expectations of specific minority groups (for example, Begaye and others 1969, Palomares 1968, and "Hemos Trabajodo Bien" 1968) have revealed similar ambivalences with regard to specific educational expectations.

The difficulty in tapping specific educational desires, expectations, and concerns is not limited to studies of minority groups. A nationwide survey of a representative sample of citizens (Carter and Chaffee 1966) found that six out of every seven citizens interviewed thought children were not getting all they should out of education, either for eventual economic benefits or for social and intellectual competencies. Similarly, in his unique study of parental grievances, Jennings (1966) found that 13 percent of the parents interviewed had grievances with course content and 27 percent of the parents had grievances with "other

events" at school. The existence of such dissatisfaction has been the subject of a number of narratives, yet relatively little research has been reported that has systematically investigated the specific concerns and expectations of the public for educational change.

A few comprehensive examinations of specific educational needs as perceived by the public (and by subgroups of that public) have concentrated on one school district or community. Two excellent examples of this type of research are described below.

As part of the Instructional Tasks Project, the specific behavioral concerns of the community served by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District for its youth were identified by the critical incident technique (Abbot and others 1968). Over 1,000 persons sampled from parents, youth, school staff, and other members of the social community contributed data from which several thousand specific valued behaviors were abstracted and then classified via content analysis into a taxonomy of community concerns. Subsequent data obtained from a control group indicated that the taxonomy was comprehensive. This taxonomy was then used to develop instructional objectives based on community concerns, and to describe similarities and differences among parts of the community in their educational concerns for youth.

As part of a project designed to develop a comprehensive master plan for education in Fresno, California, PROJECT DESIGN conducted an extensive one-year assessment of educational needs as perceived by all segments of the community (Fresno City Unified School District, all citations). These needs were eventually translated into the mission objectives of education in that

area, and represented the basis for the final educational master plan.

Similarly, other community studies have reported responses to surveys designed to specify: general attitudes toward the schools (Philadelphia School District 1969), desired educational goals and objectives (Bardwell 1960, and Wilder and others 1968), and desired educational programs and curricula (Grady 1969, Kase 1967, Nolte and Murrey 1969, Pranis and Morsbach 1968, and Preising 1967). Analyses of findings in these studies generally involved comparison of responses by social, economic, and ethnic variations in the sample.

The needs for vocational-technical education have been the subject of some studies that not only assess the opinions of students, parents, and the general citizenry, but also tap the expectations of potential future employers for the educational system (Bail and Crunkilton 1969, New York State Education Department 1967, Wright 1968, and Young 1966). Another unique approach to sample selection was employed in the McMahon and Strauss (1967) study, which focused on the expectations of 896 community leaders representing eleven groups concerned with education in Maryland.

In general, the studies reviewed here point to a number of differences of opinion regarding education on the part of various groups surveyed, although these differences are by no means consistent among the variety of research settings. The conclusion drawn by the author of a review of similar literature appears applicable here:

> Expectations held by citizens varied greatly from one task area to another. (For example)...many who held conservative expectations concerning board of education control over the private lives of teachers held liberal views concerning the extent to which pupils should be given freedom from control. (Stollar

and others 1969, from Chapter 10, which reviews literature on the public's expectations of board members; see also Chapter 7 for a review of the literature on general public opinion of the schools).

Not only have these studies found variation in expectations and concerns among subgroups and in relation to specific issues or programs, but some evidence has been accumulated showing that these expectations are changeable in varying degrees among subgroups, as a result of a school's response to an initial set of demands or concerns (Agger and Fashing 1969 and Agger and Goldstein 1965).

Perhaps the most important contribution of this literature is that it provides references to, and examples of application of, a number of instruments and approaches for assessing the public's expectations for its schools. School officials concerned with such an assessment may find in this literature a combination of research techniques for obtaining a greater understanding of the educational needs of their own community.

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EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL DEMANDS ON THE SCHOOLS

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